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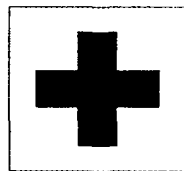
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SOMALIA

Background Information For Operation  
Restore Hope

1992-93

Walter S. Clarke

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# **SOMALIA**

## **Background Information**

### **For Operation Restore Hope**

#### **1992-93**

**Walter S. Clarke**

**December 1992**

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# **SOMALIA: OPERATION RESTORE HOPE**

## **A HANDBOOK FOR STAFF OFFICERS**

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

WALTER S. CLARKE is a Senior Foreign Service Officer in the U.S. Department of State, with over 20 years of African experience during his 34-year career. He is now serving on detail as Visiting Professor and Director of African Studies in the Department of National Security and Strategy at the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Prior to this assignment he served as Political Counselor at the American Embassy, Madrid. His career also includes postings as State Department Advisor to the President of the U.S. Naval War College, in Newport, Rhode Island, and Director of Intelligence Liaison in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research in the State Department. He was selected to open the Embassy and served as Chargé d'Affaires, a.i., at the American Embassy in Djibouti from 1977-1980 and has continued to study the affairs of the Horn of Africa since that time. Mr. Clarke served at diplomatic posts at Abidjan, Ivory Coast; Bogota, Colombia; Bujumbura, Burundi; Douala, Cameroon; Lagos, Nigeria; and San José, Costa Rica. He has received three State Department Superior Honor Awards and one Meritorious Honor Award. A graduate of Yale University (B.A., History), Mr. Clarke has done graduate studies at Northwestern University (Certificate in African Studies) and the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. A member of the African Studies Association, Mr. Clarke published **A Developmental Bibliography of the Republic of Djibouti** in 1978, in order to facilitate the development of an USAID assistance program in that country, and has contributed articles to Africanist journals.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Somalia became an independent state in 1960 with the joining of the former British Somaliland, with its capital at Hargeisa in the northeast, and the Italian Trusteeship Territory, governed from Mogadishu. A present-day map of Somalia is shown in figure 1. The total population of Somalia is believed to approach seven million (est. mid-1991), although hundreds of thousands of lives have probably been lost to war, disease and starvation in the past 2 years. Somalia is one of the rare countries in Africa in terms of cultural affinities. All of the peoples of Somalia share common cultural roots, and they speak a common language and religion (primarily Sunni Muslim). English is spoken extensively in the north, but only sparingly in Mogadishu; the most common foreign language in the southern part of the country is Italian.

Somalis are divided into six major clan groupings and a vast number of sub-clans. People sharing Somali culture are spread over 400,000 square miles of the savannah and desert of the Horn of Africa. The majority live in modern Somalia (260,000 square miles), with another million or so living in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia, another 240,000 in northern Kenya and over 200,000 in the Republic of Djibouti. The modern Somali political system is dominated by alliances and antagonisms among the clan and sub-clan groups. A list of these groups is provided in this Handbook, and we attempt to outline the latest alliances between the groups. The internal disorders which have torn the country apart in the past two years, and which led to *Operation Restore Hope* in late 1992, include many of the elements of classic ethnic conflict, as various clan and sub-clan units vie for power. The conflict in Mogadishu, of course, represents a more basic conflict between personalities within a clan that has never known such deadly cleavages. Before the time of troubles began a generation ago, Somalia was already one of the poorest countries in the world. For most Somalis, life for over a generation has been a grim struggle to survive in the face of unfriendly political systems, the arbitrary rule of a ferocious dictatorship under Siad Barre from 1969 until 1991, his quixotic war with Ethiopia (1977-78), crushing poverty, periodic drought and fear of banditry.

Although the Somali people have an strong sense of history and their language has a rich and reportedly lyric poetic focus, the current writing style (Roman script) was only adopted as recently as 1972. Somali history remains primarily oral, and in this study we review the lives of two historical figures whose stories are intrinsic to Somali history and poetry. A primarily nomadic people, the Somalis have many age-old rituals and an elaborate sense of protocol. A Somali elder once complained to the author that his son, a senior military officer in Djibouti,

# SOMALIA

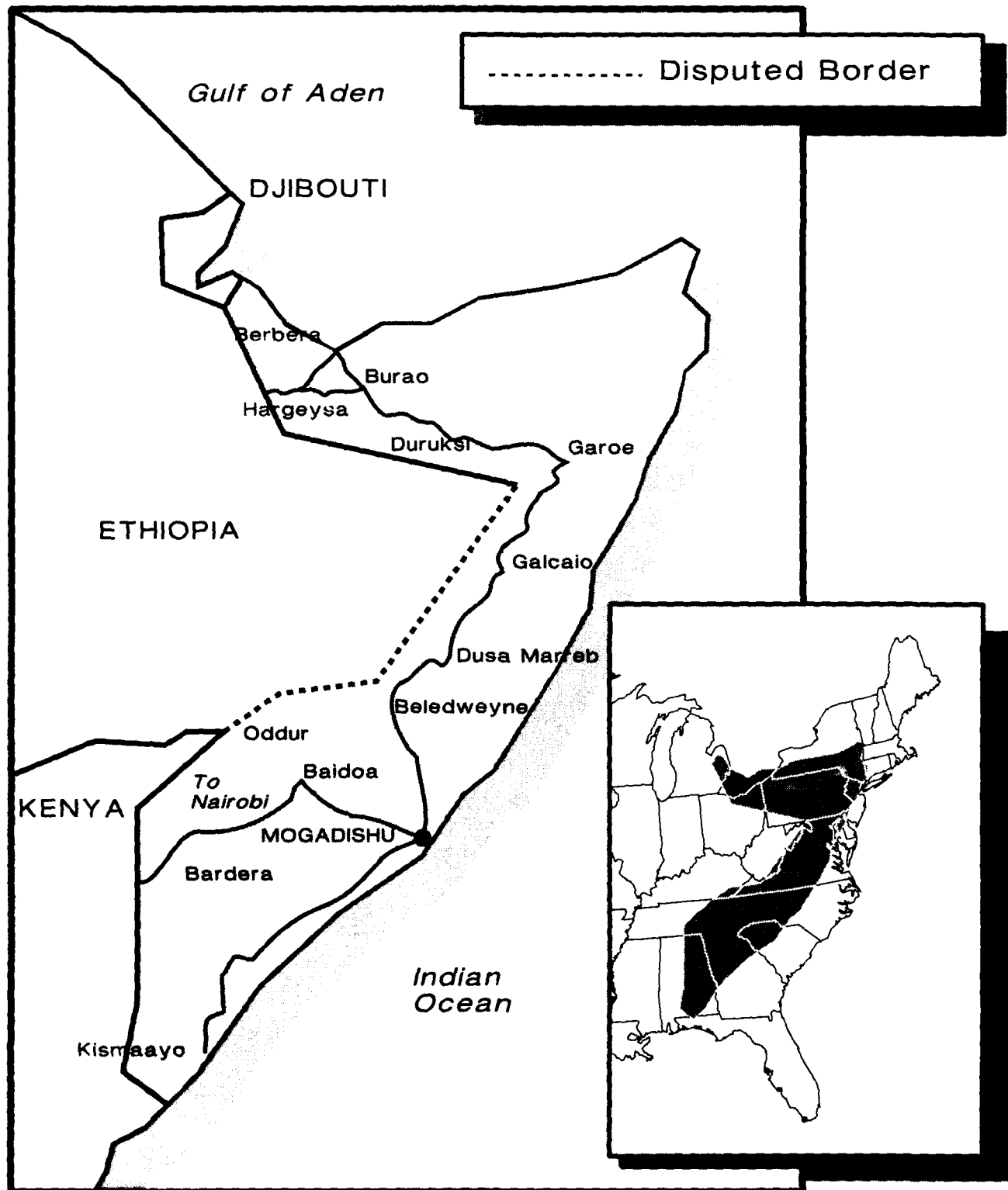


Figure 1.



was bringing "ignorant strangers" to his home. An "ignorant stranger" was defined as someone who could not recite his family genealogy to the 17th generation. Although much sapped at present by drought and starvation, the Somali people are hardworking and full of good humor. Personnel on assignment in Somali will find them to be interesting, proud, frustrating, subtle but hospitable people.

Somali people love to talk, and current business often takes a lower priority as Somalis recount lineage structures and family issues. Patience and a cool temper will gain faster and more satisfactory results in dealing with the Somali. One should not be put off by the fact that much of their conversation appears to be stimulated by the use of *qat*,<sup>1</sup> a mildly narcotic weed largely imported fresh from Kenya, Ethiopia and Yemen (it grows only at altitude), which provides a mild high. Although the use of narcotics is prohibited by the *Koran*, the peoples of the Horn protest that it is not a narcotic and because it inhibits thirst, hunger and sleep while facilitating conversation, it serves a useful social purpose. The governments of Djibouti and Somalia have each made an attempt to outlaw the use of *qat* because it also lowers productivity and consumes a large part of a family's income. In each case, the governments relented because, if it were outlawed, the governments would be deprived of much-needed revenues. In Somalia, only the *Salahiya* religious order prohibits its use; all other religious orders condone it. There are indications that *qat* use among the rootless youth in present day Somalia has become excessive, and its use no longer appears to serve any useful social purpose.

Much of the chaos now reigning in Somalia can be traced back to the doctrinaire Marxism of President Siad Barre (1969-1991) and his aberrant decision to mount an invasion of Ethiopia in 1977. With heavy arms stockpiles provided by the Soviet Union, its erstwhile ally, the Somali President hoped to profit from instability within the government of Ethiopia and its declining relations with the United States to take over the territory of the Ogaden, where hundreds of thousands of ethnic Somalis lived. Using Ogadeni clansmen of the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) for light infantry, combined with heavy Soviet armor, the invasion sealed the rupture with their Soviet allies and provided an opportunity for the Soviet Union to mount one of the largest sea and airlifts then known, as it came to Ethiopia's assistance. The Somali invasion was at first successful, and Somali troops arrived at the gates of Harar and the Highlands of Ethiopia. Within a few weeks of the commencement of the Soviet airlift in November 1977, Ethiopian and Cuban troops, backed up by hundreds of Soviet advisors (many of whom had served as advisors to Siad's forces), turned the tide. The beaten Somali troops were soon used by Siad Barre against their own populations, as restive sub-clan groups demonstrated their impatience with Siad's quixotic rule after the war was lost. After the Ogaden

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<sup>1</sup> *Qat* is also known variously as *khat*, *kat* or *chat*. In scientific terms, *qat* is *catha edulis* or *celastrus edulis*.

war ended, the United States hoped to substitute for its lost relationship with Ethiopia by obtaining a foothold in Somalia. The U.S. completed the near-finished Soviet air and naval installation at Berbera in northern Somalia, which served U.S. forces until the agreement was permitted to lapse in 1988.

Somalia has generally not had good relations with its neighbors. Somali culture probably plays a significant factor in this. A primarily nomadic society, with the exception of certain southern agricultural groups, traditional nomadic Somali culture does not recognize political boundaries or physical barriers. Considerable protocol and diplomacy has developed within the culture to control confrontations over the use of water holes or grazing facilities. In the precolonial period, the clash of nomadic Somali groups in search of water and grass led to numerous conflicts with the ferocious 'Afar groups which populated much of northern Somalia and with the Oromo (Galla) and Amhara populations of the Harar region of the Ogaden and the highlands of Ethiopia. The early 20th century colonial partition of the Horn of Africa led to the development of European spheres of influence and subsequent colonies by Italy, France and Great Britain in the early years of this century. The consolidation of Ethiopia under Emperor Menelik in the last decade of the 19th century also led to confrontations in the Ogaden. These external interventions separated the Somali people into five different colonial territories. As a result, one of Somalia's most important national goals, stated in its 1960 independence constitution, was the gathering of all Somali populations under one flag. Significantly, Somalia was the only African state not to support the applicable clause of the Charter of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) signed in 1964, which stipulated that existing colonial frontiers should be respected.

Siad Barre's attitudes towards the neighboring Republic of Djibouti, which received independence from the French in June 1977, reflected his hegemonic goal of uniting all Somali ethnic groups. Although Djibouti has a majority Somali population and had an independent government led by an ethnic Somali, it did not choose to join with Siad Barre's Somalia, an effective repudiation of pan-Somalism. Somalia's meddling in Djibouti's internal affairs periodically caused relations between the two states to be strained. Equally, Kenya watches with concern Somalia's efforts to stir up problems within its northeast ethnic Somali citizens. This led to some pre-emptive diplomacy on the part of Kenya's leadership to maintain outwardly warm relations with Siad Barre's Marehan clan. Somalia's painful war with Ethiopia in 1977-78 will not be forgotten in either state, and, although diplomatic relations have been restored, Ethiopia has generally been supportive of northern Somali separatist groups.

It has been the author's experience in Africa and elsewhere that knowledge of a country's history and culture is essential to opening doors and establishing and maintaining friendships and contacts. Perhaps more than most African societies, the Somalis have a deep awareness of their

history, culture and past achievements. This handbook is written with the hope of stimulating some appreciation of Somali history and culture; details are given of recent history so that readers will have some name and event recognition. The extensive chronology supplements the descriptive materials, in the hope of outlining the medium-term timeline which led to the present mess in Somalia.

A note on the spelling of Somali names: A number of sources have been used in writing the handbook. Before 1972, transliteration of Somali names was very much left to the discretion of authors. The result was a wide variety of spellings, mostly reflecting the native language or nationality of the authors. Since 1972, some authors have used Somali spellings, but most have simply continued older forms. The author has attempted to standardize spellings, using the most common spellings of American specialists. The Somalis have a playful enthusiasm for assigning nick-names for themselves and for visitors. This can sometimes be confusing. In this handbook, nick-names are placed in parentheses.

In addition to the supplementary readings listed in the Handbook, the author has regularly consulted *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, *Le Monde* (Paris), *Africa Confidential* (London), the *Indian Ocean Newsletter* (Paris), as well as a number of Africanist periodicals. Any errors or omissions are the responsibility of the author.

## 2. CLAN HISTORY AND ORGANIZATION

A brief look at Somali ethnic history provides useful insights into the modern attitudes of the Somali people. The origins of the Somali remain a mystery that scholars continue to debate. Until recently, conventional wisdom was that the first Somali pastoralists came from the north and settled in the area of what is now southern Somalia about 1000 years ago.<sup>2</sup> A more recent source asserts that the most likely ancestral home of the Somalis was in the highlands of modern-day Ethiopia, with indications that Somali peoples may have entered the lowlands of the Horn as long as 2000 years ago. Their migrations into the grasslands displaced other cattle culture peoples whose names are lost to history.<sup>3</sup> With well-defined Abyssinian semitic influences, and inheriting some traditions from people already in place, the Somalis were also influenced by the trading communities of the Indian Ocean, especially the Persians, Omanis and the Yemenis. It is assumed that the Somalis adopted Islam as their religion as the result of their contacts with

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<sup>2</sup> Moradhai Abir, *Ethiopia and the Red Sea*, pp. xix-xx.

<sup>3</sup> David D. Laitin and Said S. Samatar, *Somalia: Nation in Search of a State*, pp. 5-6.

traders on the coast. Although the nomadic clans (see below) tend to be more broadly dispersed, such as the *Darood* located in central and southern Somalia, most clan groups have fairly well-defined geographical zones of activity. The *Hawiye* are located in the Mogadishu area, the *Isaaq* in the north, the *Dir* in the northwest and the *Digil* and the *Rahanwayn* in the river areas of the south. Mogadishu was one of the earliest entrepôts for trade between traders and interior groups; the earliest description of the city is by the Spanish-born Moroccan traveler, Ibn Battuta, who visited Mogadishu in 1331. Other trading towns well-known to ancient travelers included Berbera and Zeila in the north and Merka and Barare in the south.

According to Somali tradition, two modern clans owe their origins to the arrival of Muslim saints.<sup>4</sup> The first is Sheikh Darood, who is supposed to have arrived in southern Somalia at the end of the 11th century and to have married the daughter of a Somali patriarch. Tradition says that the children of this union were the founders of the various Darood sub-clans. At the end of the 13th century, another Muslim saint, Sheikh Isahaaq, arrived in northern Somalia. His descendants provide the legend of origin for the various Isaaq sub-clans. As the Somalis became more numerous, their search for new pastures and water holes assumed the dimension of invasions into northern Kenya, the Ogaden and Awash valley of Ethiopia. Other ethnic groups, especially the Oromo in Ethiopia, and the Afar in modern Ethiopia and Djibouti, resisted these incursions, establishing traditional antagonisms which endure to the present.

The political dynamic of Somalia is largely determined by clan and lineage structures. As noted on the ethnic map (Figure 2), the clans can be identified by their geographical locations. The larger nomadic groups tend to have sub-clans located along the length of Somalia. The clan schematic provided at Figure 3 can only be considered an introduction to the complexity of clans and lineages in Somalia. In section 3, we will outline the most important traditional features of the Somali political system. Despite the apparent homogeneity of Somali culture, there are very significant differences in status and life styles of the Somali people. Although great scholarly controversy exists about the origins of the Somali people, most Somalis believe that they are descendants of noble Arabic lineages and the family of the Prophet.<sup>5</sup> What is clear is that there are a number of Arabic words in the Somali language. Differences in spoken language also exist between southern and northern clans. The primarily agricultural Digil and Rahanwein groups who settled along the banks of the Juba and Shabelli rivers in the south speak a Somali dialect as different from the northern pastoral groups as that of Spanish and Portuguese. The nomadic clan families, the Dir, Isaaq, Hawiye and Darood, believe that they are the "true Somali" and therefore have a higher status in Somali society. The southern groups only achieved some kind

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<sup>4</sup> Laitin and Samatar, *ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>5</sup> I.M. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia*, p. 5.

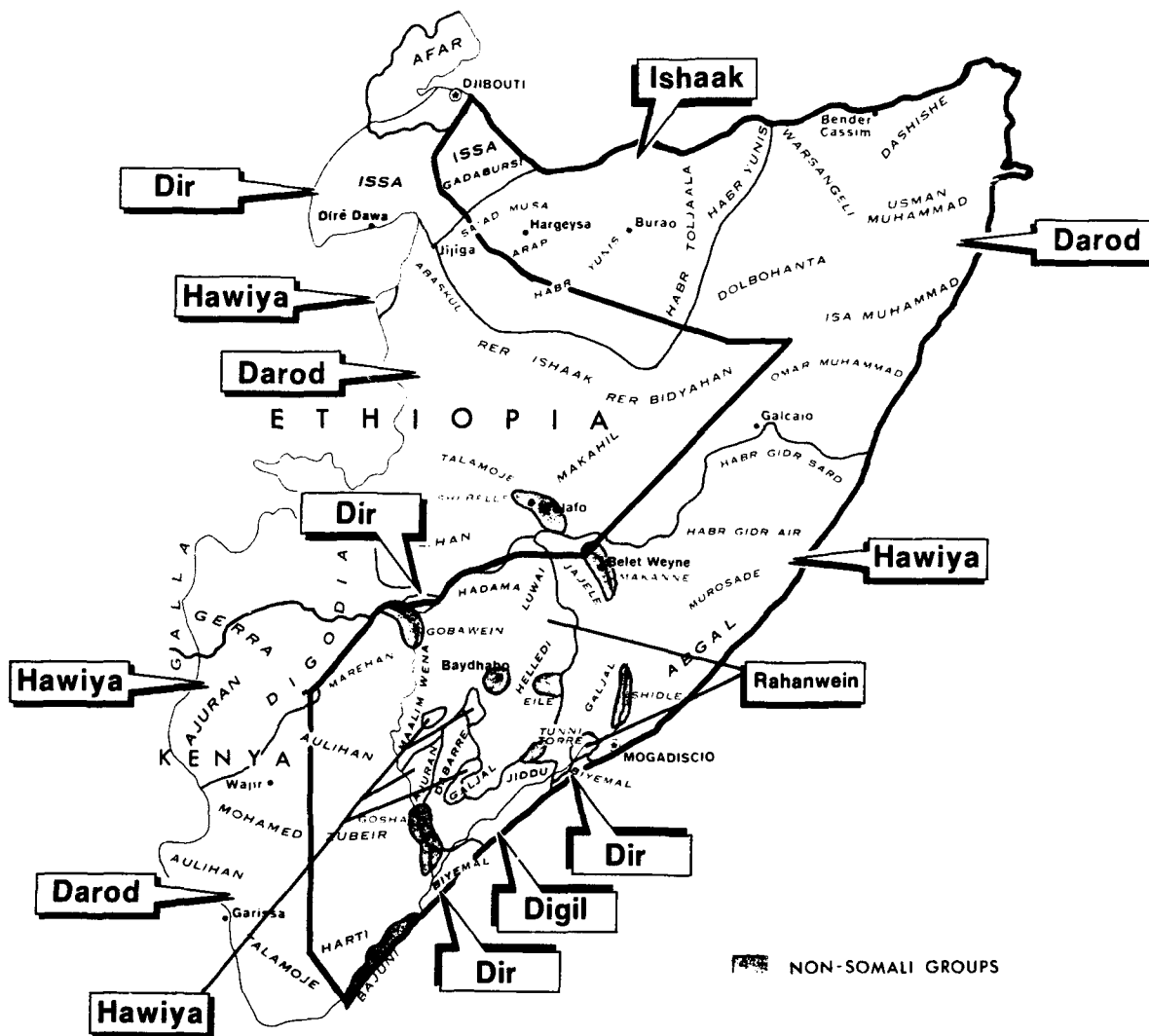


Figure 2. Ethnic Map of Somalia.

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# SOMALI

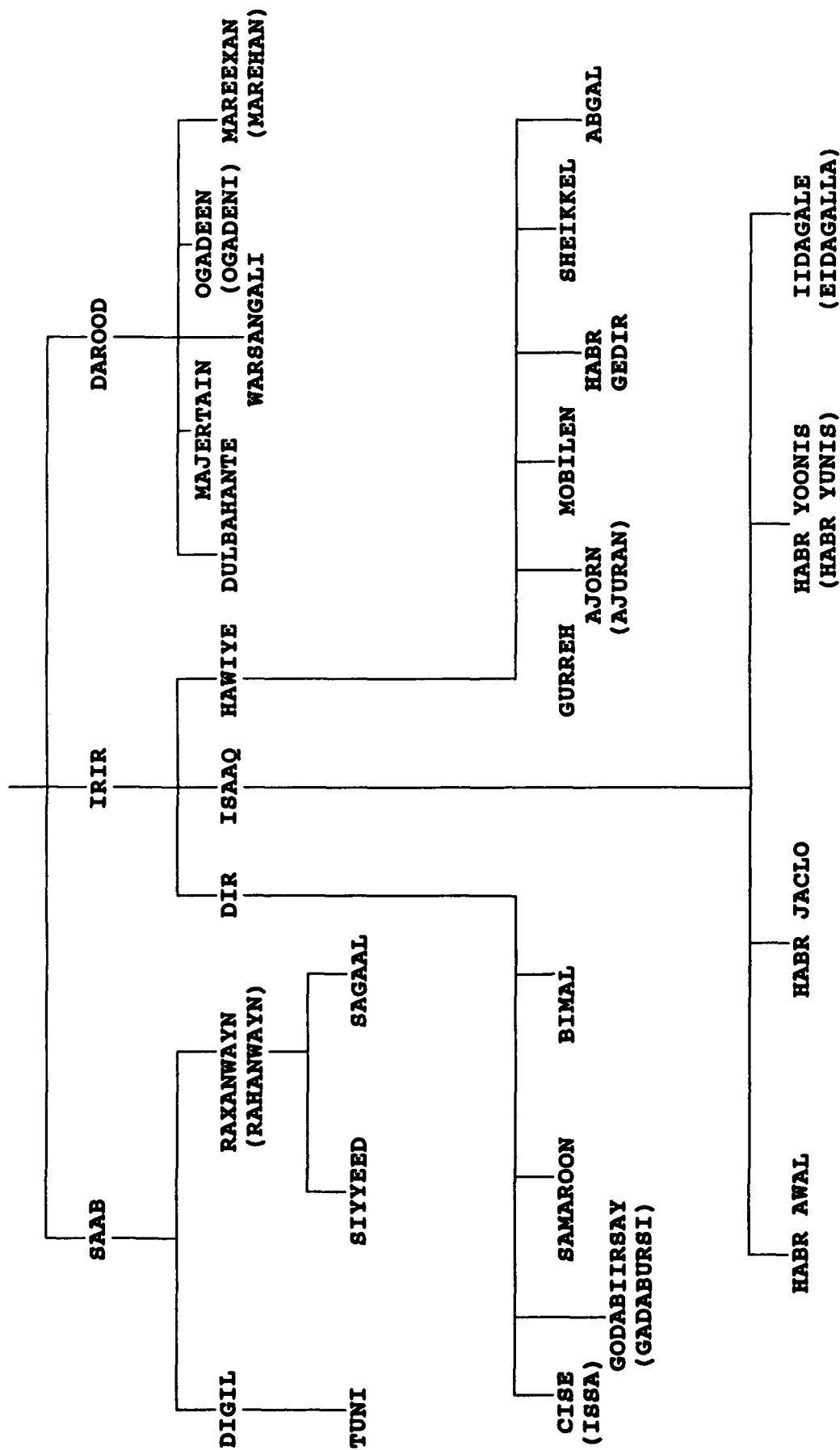


FIGURE 3. CLAN STRUCTURE OF SOMALIA .

of political equality during the tenure of Siad Barre who displayed some skill in playing off the tensions which exist within traditional society.

At the bottom of the Somali social hierarchy are the *toumal*, or "blacksmiths." This social phenomenon indicates some carryover of Bantu African traditions, as fear of blacksmith "magic" and sedentary life styles leads to social discrimination throughout sub-Saharan Africa.

### 3. DOMESTIC POLITICAL DYNAMICS

Like most African countries of the modern era, the political state of Somalia was formed before there was a clear sense of nationhood. In retrospect, even for Somalis, the decision of the country's founders to include the aspiration of gathering all Somali populations under one flag ("pan-Somalism") must appear to be a fundamental error. This goal inhibited the development of a national consensus because it maintained the focus of politicians on traditional clan politics and kept alive dreams which were dysfunctional on the international level. Equally paradoxically, the decision to focus on a supra-national Somali identity provided Somalia's

neighbors and enemies virtually unlimited excuses to play one Somali group against another. In order to deflect attention from his narrow clan political base, an opportunistic dictator like Siad Barre found it easy to adopt a firm "anti-tribal" policy while doing everything possible to eliminate the internal coherence of enemy clans, subclans, religious structures and leadership. Siad's excesses eventually caused the collapse of the dictatorship, and today there are very few building blocks now available to initiate peace between clans and eventually to support the creation of a national government. Somalia today exhibits most of the frailties of a failed state, unable to provide protection or services.

The highest level of politics today in Somalia is clan politics. (See Figure 4 for the percentage distribution of the population by clan and kinship groups.) To understand the dynamics of Somali politics, it may be useful to look back at the structures of the colonial period. The Hawiye, with their geographical home in the region of Mogadishu, and the Isaaq, with theirs

DAROOD		20
	Dolbuhanta	
	Majertain	
	Marehan	
	Ogadeni	
	Warsangeli	
DIGIL		3
DIR		7
	Gadabursi	
	Issa	
HAWIYE		25
	Abgal	
	Ajuran	
	Degodia	
	Habr Gedir	
	Hawadle	
	Murosade	
ISAAQ		22
	Eidagalla	
	Habr Awal	
	Habr Toljaala	
	Habr Yunis	
RAHANWEIN		17
ETHNIC MINORITIES		
	Negroid	4
	Other	2
(including Toumal)		
[1966 estimates]		

Figure 4.

in the area of Hargeisa, were well situated near centers of colonial governmental activity.<sup>6</sup> As a result, both the Hawiye and the Isaaq were predominant in the colonial civilian administration, and these groups continued to predominate in the administrations because they were in place at the time of independence in 1960. The colonial military, however, was composed of non-urban, nomadic groups. Italian and British native forces recruited Darood militiamen and gendarmes. The Darood are particularly hearty and were not daunted by service in the most rugged and arid regions, far from the ports and the commercial centers located in the Isaaq areas of British Somaliland and the Hawiye areas of Italian Somalia.<sup>7</sup> Traditional rivalries between these groups were therefore reinforced by the colonial masters whose interests were the reverse of "nation building." Their interest was to find the groups most likely to support the continuation of colonial rule.

The last open and free elections in Somalia were held in March 1969. Although as many as 70 political parties participated in the contest, with over 1,000 candidates for the 123-seat national assembly, the elections proved to be something of a fiasco. As noted by Horowitz, the "unusually violent 1969 parliamentary election campaign sorely tested the Somali tradition of clan balancing and shifting alliances."<sup>8</sup> During the election campaign, disorders broke out between the traditionally hostile Darood Marehan and Hawiye Habr Gidr subgroups, when the Minister of Justice, a Marehan, was accused of ballot stuffing. It happens that the army commander, Siad Barre, was less interested in the fate of the nation than he was for the interests of his Marehan Darood ethnic compatriots in the army. The elections were followed, some months later, by the assassination of President Abdirashid Ali Shermarke. As the rudderless parliament debated the succession, the coup occurred.

The timing of the coup obviously resulted from Siad Barre's personal decision to benefit from ongoing civilian disorder, but he also profited from army resentment at the efforts of the civilian regime to achieve détente with Ethiopia and Kenya, from concerns about shifts from military to developmental spending, police resentment at their deployment for partisan purposes and at the dismissal of a police commandant who had tried to prevent this.<sup>9</sup> Reportedly, Barre had covertly supplied rebels in Kenya and Ethiopia whom his civilian superiors were no longer supporting. Because the army was heavily Darood in composition and led by a Darood officer,

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<sup>6</sup> Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, p. 151.

<sup>7</sup> I.M. Lewis, "Nationalism and Particularism in Somalia," in P.H. Gulliver, ed., *Tradition and Transition in East Africa*, pp. 343-344.

<sup>8</sup> Horowitz, *ibid*, p. 466.

<sup>9</sup> Al Castagno, "Somalia goes Military," *Africa Report* (February 1970), pp. 25-27.



it could be expected to react unfavorably to the détente policy of an Isaaq prime minister. The Darood community spills across the Ethiopian and Kenya borders, and so the Darood felt they had a special stake in continuing the policy of Somali ethnic and cultural irredentism.

Over and above these considerations, developments in the Somali party system had increased the political importance of sub-ethnic allegiances. The most significant development in this direction was the growing split within the dominant Somali Youth League in the years following 1964. As this occurred, the extended lineage groups temporarily lost their significance in party politics, and effective allegiance had fallen back to the smaller constituent lineages which were now combining across their parent divisions.<sup>10</sup>

Looking across the border at Ethiopia, Siad Barre saw a close relationship between the United States and his enemy. Realizing that the Soviet Union would be interested in extending its strategic position from the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) across the Gulf of Aden, Barre played the Cold War card decisively. The new Siad Barre government announced radical plans to transform the poor, conservative and profoundly Muslim country of nomads and villages into a modern socialist state, wedded to "scientific socialism." It is ironic that one of the first actions of the Siad Barre government to implement these grandiose plans in 1969 was to outlaw all references to clan and sub-clan membership. Social events such as engagement celebrations, weddings and funerals were permitted only in orientation centers, where courses in political theory were compulsory.<sup>11</sup> Siad Barre's political decisions remained deeply affected by ethnic considerations. In the 25-member Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC) established after the coup, the formerly influential Habr Gidr and Isaaq were eclipsed by their traditional rivals. He packed the new SRC with his supporters. Only one of seven Hawiye SRC members was Habr Gidr. Of the ten Darood members, however, three (including Siad and his nephew) came from the previously uninfluential Marehan subgroup, a fourth was Siad's son-in-law, and nearly all the Darood members were staunchly loyal to Siad.<sup>12</sup> Among them were his nephew, commandant of the air force, and his son-in-law, director of the National Security Service. Already in control of the regular army, Siad unofficially assumed personal command of the police.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> I.M. Lewis, "The Politics of the 1969 Somalia Coup," *Journal of Modern African Studies* (October 1972), pp. 381-408.

<sup>11</sup> Rakiya Omaar, "Somalia: At War with Itself," *Current History* (May 1992), p. 231.

<sup>12</sup> Horowitz, *ibid.*, pp. 523-524.

<sup>13</sup> Horowitz, *ibid.*, p. 552.

One of the most unfortunate aspects of Siad's rule was the introduction of his family to national politics. Brig. Gen. Mohamed Said Hersi "Morgan," Siad Barre's son-in-law, became a world-class human rights violator and is considered by most Somali today to be a war criminal. He is a Majertain, a group closely related to the ruling Marehan of Siad. When he was military commander in northern Somalia, he ordered indiscriminate firing on civilian populations. He now leads a large dissident military organization in southern Somalia. Press reports indicate that he is well provided in weapons by the Kenya military. Abdurahman Siad "Maslah," is the favored son for Siad. He was commander of the military district of Mogadishu and led the bloody 1990 repressions in the capital that eventually resulted in his father's overthrow.

As may be seen in the next section, the Barre regime saw the creation of many opposition groups who attempted to break his rule through treachery, assassination and insurgency. Siad Barre responded in kind, with widespread repression, arbitrary arrest, torture and murder. He became one of the most extravagant human rights' violators. By the end of the Siad period, the Hawiye and Isaaq, as well as many other groups, were totally disaffected from his rule.

#### **4. POLITICAL/CLAN ORGANIZATIONS**

The center of gravity in Somali politics remains the interaction of clan and sub-clan groups. In the pre-1969 parliamentary system, the Isaaq, Majertain and a few other allied groups obtained the largest benefits from their control of the national government. The 1969 coup brought Siad's Marehan and other Darood clans to power. As noted, President Siad Barre pursued strict policies aimed at diminishing the role of other ethnic organizations while rewarding his own Marehan group and allied groups with economic and political favors. Clearly intending to repress and divide his opposition, Barre denied any political outlet to groups that he assumed would be in opposition to his narrow base. Paradoxically, through his own policies, Siad Barre probably facilitated clan political organization as no Somali leader has ever done before. The shape of the political system during Siad's long period of misrule was dominated by the Marehan and the Ogadeni, with efforts to ally with the Dolbuhanta while attempting to prevent an alliance between the Hawiye and the Isaaq.

This is not to say that every Somali automatically assumes a clan posture in every political situation. The **Somali Youth League (SYL)**, which provided the focus of anti-colonial resistance prior to the independences of northern and southern Somalia in 1960 was strongly nationalistic. The SYL was the effective winner of the 1969 elections, but because it supported an entente with Ethiopia, it gained the ire of regionalists and the military who had other aspirations. Siad Barre adopted the Marxist philosophy of the SYL but devoted a great deal of

effort to co-opting and making it into his vehicle for politicizing the intellectual classes. At the urging of the Soviet Union, Siad Barre established a single government party in 1976, the **Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party (SRSP)**. With himself as Secretary General of the SRSP, and head of its central committee, Siad attempted to use the party as a neutral stabilizing force within the political system. Allegedly, he hoped to achieve an equitable distribution of party positions for clan representatives. This goal was impossible to attain in a political culture in which everything else supported the leader's parochial political needs. The SRSP soon languished and served only a protocol requirement in handling visiting Eastern European Communist party delegations. It is likely that Somalia's educated class retains some form of allegiance to the SYL, and it would not be surprising to see a comeback for the SYL, especially if public opinion turns against participants in *Restore Hope*. Somalis are quite capable of uniting in the face of a foreign danger, with a resultant wave of nationalism. We doubt that the SRSP will ever be heard from again.

Religious groups play a supportive political role in Somalia. They provide the only traditional element which easily crosses inter-clan barriers. Many religious leaders returned to Somalia after Siad's fall. As we learn more about the interior of Somalia, we will probably see that most have been active in repairing the relationships between clans and sub-clans which were fractured in the Siad period.

Cross clan marriages are common in Somalia. This is particularly true in the cities and among students who have studied overseas. This does not usually lead to political identity problems. In cases of mixed clan marriages, there will be allegiance to both groups by both partners. Although no clear research is available on this point, it appears from the readings that children of mixed clan marriages will tend to identify more strongly with the clan of the mother.

Among political groups that now operate in northern and southern Somalia are the following:

**The Somali National Alliance (SNA):** Formed 14 August 1992 around the United Somali Congress by General Mohamed Farah Aideed. The SNA is currently composed of Col. Omar Gess' faction of the Somali Patriotic Movement (Ogadenis), the Somali Democratic Movement (SDM), a small southern group composed of the Digil and Mirifleh sub-clans, the Habr Gedir faction of the United Somali Congress (USC) led by General Aideed, and a new group, the Southern Somali National Movement (SSNM), a group of southern clans. Once formed, the SNA immediately pressed an attack on the Hawadle Hawiye sub-clan militia which held the Mogadishu port area.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Indian Ocean Newsletter No. 539 (29 August 1992), p. 3.

**The Somali National Front (SNF):** This is the military front of the Marehan of the Darood, the sub-clan of former president Siad Barre. Although it commands only about 3% of Somalia's population, it controlled the government in Mogadishu for many years. It claims not to include Siad Barre among its members.

**The Somali National Movement (SNM):** Founded in London in 1981, it moved its headquarters to Addis Ababa in 1982 in order to secure more assistance from Ethiopia and Libya. The SNM consists of the followers of the dominant Isaaq clan in the northeast (something like 22% of the total Somali population). It has many vying subgroups, and there appears to be a struggle for power between the political and military wings. It is led by Abdirahman Ahmed Ali "Tur," who is also the provisional president of the Somaliland Republic. For several years, the SNM was supported in money and military materiel by the Ethiopian government of Mengistu Haile Mariam. It now is believed to receive significant funding from Saudi Arabia and other conservative Arab states. In late 1986, Hawiye members of the SNM opposed the unification of the SNM and SSDF because of fear that Majertain members who dominate the SSDF would also be able to dominate a unified SNM/SSDF movement, thereby eliminating the influence of the Hawiye in dissident politics. The SNM has traditionally been led by former members of Siad Barre's armed forces. The SNM has had little success in extending its influence beyond the Isaaq, although it has some military units with Hawiye clansmen.

**The Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM):** This group was said to project the interests of the Ogadenis, who live in the southern part of Somalia and were part of the larger Darood group, which also has many sub-clans in northern Somalia (as well as the Ogaden area of Ethiopia). The leadership lines became fractured as the result of a contest between Col. Omar Gess, now the patron of Kismayu, and Adan Nur "Gabiyu." Ali Mahdi supporters, Bashir Bililiqo and Omar Mo'allim, are also important. The SPM has an ambiguous relationship with the USC. Siad's infamous son-in-law, Mohammed Said Hersi "Morgan," appears to have as one of his goals the takeover of this group. The Ogadeni are also divided. At Kismayu, there has been considerable violence, due to the struggles between Omar Jess and Adan Nur "Gabiyu" for supremacy.

**The Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF):** Founded in 1981, this group represents the aspirations of the Majertain, who are especially important in the northeast. Within the SSDF, the principal rivals are moderates. The SSDF was the first group to rise up against Siad Barre in the early 1980s. However, because of their geographic position, they were unable to play a role in upsetting him. Col. Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, the founder of the SSDF, supports Ali Mahdi but needs to rebuild his own popularity which sagged during the 6 years he spent as a POW in Ethiopia. Neither he nor "Morgan" support the Djibouti process. Among its leaders

are a number of Majertain former Somali air force officers who participated in the abortive 1978 coup against Siad Barre, who fled the country to form the **Somali Salvation Front (SSF)**. The SSF joined in October 1981 with some smaller, leftist groups to form the SSDF. The political leaders are Mohammed Abshir Musa and Musa Islan Farah. The SSDF is led by Abdullahi Yusuf who belongs to the rer Mahat faction of the Omar Mohammed sub-clan from the vicinity of Galcayo. As one of the 1978 plotters, he is a professional military man with a reputation for authoritarian direction of the party. The SSDF was for a long period in exile in Ethiopia and elsewhere. During its exile, the SSDF received substantial funding from the Ethiopian and Libyan governments.

The **United Somali Congress (USC)**: Predominantly Hawiye, which has about 25% of the total population of the country. The power struggle between two principal Hawiye protagonists are provisional president Ali Mahdi of the Mogadishu-based *Abgal* and Gen. Mohammed Farah Aidede's rural *Habr Gid'r Sa'ad* sub-clan. The personal battle began in earnest in November 1991, and it has torn Mogadishu apart as the city became a battlefield. Aidede's fighters quickly captured most of Mogadishu, while Ali Mahdi's supporters hold most of the northern areas contiguous to his Abgal heartland. His efforts to secure legitimacy earned him the support of one wing of the USC, the SPM and the Majertain-led Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), as well as three smaller clans. Aidede, the SNM, and the majority of SPM elements all refused to recognize Ali Mahdi's position. Aidede has attempted to meld a coalition of the Hawiye and Isaaq which would then include about half of the country's population into some kind of governing majority. This would probably lead to widespread disaffection among the Darood, who comprise about 20% of the country's population but are predominant in the south and northeast.

The **Western Somali Liberation Front** was established by Siad Barre's government in the 1970s to serve as a vehicle for destabilizing Ethiopian rule in the Ogaden. Most of its members were Ogadeni. During the course of the Ogaden war, the WSLF fought bravely but deeply resented the immediate imposition of political control over "liberated" areas by Siad Barre's native Marehan security forces. During the conflict the WSLF gained the adhesion of many Issa from the Republic of Djibouti. This led to some internal disputes as certain Djibouti Issa followed their own political agenda which included cession of the liberated Issa zones (primarily along the Djibouti-Addis Ababa rail line) to the newly-independent Republic of Djibouti. The WSLF is believed now to number no more than a few hundred adherents.

In the matter of the invasion of the Ogaden in 1977-78, Siad Barre clearly hoped to recover Somali territories under Ethiopian rule, but he also hoped to profit from changing international alliances and to buoy up his own declining dictatorship. In taking on a country with several times his own national population, Siad proved to be much more a clan leader than a national

leader. The performance of WSLF irregulars, often under Somali national army officers, was generally credible in the opening weeks of the Somali invasion of the Ogaden. However, Somali logistics were poor, and the depredations of Siad's political commissars on WSLF units caused very poor morale. Once Ethiopia's new Soviet advisors had obtained the heavy materiel and Cuban advisory personnel on the ground, the Somali offensive quickly collapsed. Based on his bloody 21-year performance, Siad seems to be an unlikely candidate to become a national hero. However, his sons and other family members continue to fight in southern Somalia, and they will likely attempt to make him appear to be a hero of resistance to foreign invasion.

## 5. SIGNIFICANT HISTORICAL FIGURES

All cultures need folk heroes. Excluding the agonies of the recent Ogaden war, for which traditional attitudes are still germinating, there have been two major political-military episodes in the history of the Somali people. Each contributes strongly to Somali ethnic nationalism, as well as to inter-clan relations. Because these historical events and personalities still affect the shape the Somali political system, they are outlined for the reader interested in Somali traditions. Although most of the published reports on these events are the results of Western research, the events and personalities cited are much in the Somali oral tradition. As noted, there are two situations which traditionally unite the quarrelsome Somali clans: (1) religious revivals, normally under a charismatic leader, sometimes leading to a religious crusade, or *jihad*, against either less devout Somalis or non-Muslim peoples; and (2) resistance to foreign invasion of Somali ethnic territory and/or the reconquest of territories in which Somali culture predominates. In the two case studies cited, the first, the fabled invasion of the Highlands of Ethiopia by Ahmad Gran in the 16th century, includes elements of both of the above mentioned motivations, following a long period of foreign (Ethiopian, or Abyssinian, as it was then known) occupation of territory of what is now northern Somalia. The second national hero, Muhammad Abdullah Hassan, the "Poor Man of God" in Somali tradition and the "Mad Mullah" in British historiography, mounted a 21-year resistance to colonial rule between 1899-1920, when his dervishes (soldiers) proved generally invincible in guerrilla and medium-size unit operations against vastly superior British-led international ground forces.

### Imam Ahmad Gran - "The Left-handed."

The amity and good-will which had endured over a millennia between the Somali and Ethiopian peoples became badly frayed by the end of the 15th century. Abyssinia, as it was then known, had been largely spared from Islamic *jihad*, allegedly because of the Prophet's own injunction. However, the Abyssinian king (*negus*) Yeshaq (1414-1429) expanded his kingdom's political and

commercial interests into the trade routes and domains of the Somali Kingdom of Ifat, centered in Zeila. Yehaq declared the Muslims to be "enemies of the Lord" and invaded Ifat in 1415. The local Muslim potentate, king Sa'ad ad-Din, was defeated, and he was pursued up the coast and killed by the invading army. The populations of the coast bridled under the harsh mis-rule of the Abyssinians, but it took over a century to overthrow them.

The instrument of this *jihad*, undertaken to rid the country of foreign occupation, was Imam Ahmad Gran (termed the "left-handed" by his Abyssinian enemies), who raised a large army from Islamic groups throughout the Horn of Africa. The charismatic Gran (1506-1543) carried the battle to the highlands of Ethiopia. Gran's army may have numbered over 50,000. His aggressive pursuit of his adversaries, special genius for maintenance of long supply lines and battlefield management are the continuing subjects of legend. His successes in Abyssinia led to the first substantial foreign military intervention in sub-Saharan Africa. Portuguese troops, led by Christophe da Gama, son of the great explorer, Vasco da Gama (who rounded Cape Horn in 1497 and was the first Western discoverer of the sea route to India), arrived in Abyssinia in the nick of time to save the remainder of the "Christian kingdom." Da Gama was killed in combat in the defense of the Christian kingdom, believed to be the Kingdom of Prester John, the existence of which persisted in the folklore of Medieval Europe.

Certain Somali clans, particularly the Habr Magdle Isaaq, the Harti Darood, and the Marehan, particularly distinguished themselves in the wars against the Abyssinians, and remain a vital part of oral tradition in Djibouti, Somalia and Ethiopia.<sup>15</sup> Portuguese influence remained strong in East Africa until 1728, when they were dislodged from Fort Jesus in Mombasa. This was followed by a long period of Omani rule of the coastal cities, distinguished by its light hand and emphasis on ceremony.

The Ahmad Gran tradition in the Horn is sufficiently ambiguous that he is considered the national hero of the Galla (now known as the Oromo) who are the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia; the Somalis; and the Afar, a substantial ethnic minority in Ethiopia, Djibouti and southern Eritrea.

#### Muhammad Abdullah Hassan - "The Poor Man of God"

With the loss of trade from Harar and increasing pressure from the British, French and Italians for trade and territory, the northern Somali coast had only a shadow of its previous prestige by the end of the 19th century. As often happens in time of political stress and social decay, a

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<sup>15</sup> Abir, *ibid* , p. 12.

great wave of religious revivalism swept the countryside, with religious settlements (*jama'a*) established throughout the Somali peninsula. This period of religious fervor led to the formation of a number of Islamic Brotherhoods (*tariqa*) whose fanaticism was directly related to the nervous levels and piety of their charismatic leaders. The oldest *tariqa* was the *Qadariya*, established in southern Somalia during the time of Sheikh Abdarrahan Zeilawi, who died in 1883. Another branch of the *Qadariya* was established in the north, under the leadership of Uways Muhammad al-Barawi, who died in 1909. This *tariqa* included the clan members of the Gadabursi, the Issa, most of the Isaaq and the Ogadenis. While the *Qadariya* attracted the majority of the Somalis towards the end of the 19th century, another *tariqa*, the *Ahmadiya*, founded by Seyyid Ahmad ibn Idris al-Fasi (1760-1837) was growing in strength. There were significant doctrinal differences between the two brotherhoods. The *Qadariya* was considered the more liberal of the two; its members could use tobacco and *qat*. The most significant difference between the two concerned the miraculous abilities of their founders.<sup>16</sup>

Into the volatile zone of northern Somalia in the 1880s came British employees of the Indian government in Bombay. Their primary interest was to ensure that the vital port of Aden, established in 1843 on the southernmost tip of the Arabian peninsula, and a strategic point, with the opening of the Suez Canal, could be maintained in cattle, sheep and other provisions. The British chose to use the formula of "indirect rule" in Somalia, just as they had elsewhere in Africa and other colonies. The British did not take into account the relative weakness of Somali chiefs and headmen in comparison to local religious leaders, who possessed *wadad*, or supernatural powers. The religious leaders also had broader powers because, by definition, the *tariqa* included membership across clan organizations. It was not long before there was open hostility between the British and the local religious leaders in northern Somalia. Militant Islam soon became the focus of xenophobia and bloody incidents.

In April 1864, in the Dolbuhanta region of northern Somalia, Muhammad Abdullah Hassan was born. His ethnic roots were tied to both the Dolbuhanta and the Ogadeni. At age 15, he began to preach the fundamentals of Islam; his effectiveness as a teacher earned the honorary title of Sheikh before the age of 20. He then began a long period of travel, which took him to Harar, still a center of Islamic teaching; Mogadishu; Mecca; and perhaps trips to Palestine, Kenya and the Sudan. At Mecca, Muhammad Abdullah studied under the Wahabi mullah, Muhammad Salih, and became a member of his *tariqa*. He returned to Berbera in 1895 and became a fervent preacher of the Salihya message of reform. Muhammad Abdullah's puritanical denial of all European pleasures did not appeal to Somalis working in the administrative capital. His mission did not prosper in Berbera, and, in 1897, he retreated to the Dolbuhanta area of his birth. After

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<sup>16</sup> Robert L. Hess, "The Poor Man of God -- Muhammad Abdullah Hassan," in Norman R. Bennett, *Leadership in Eastern Africa: Six Political Biographies*, pp. 68-70.



serving as a mediator in local disputes, his reputation grew among both the Somalis and the British, but his basic distaste for the white foreigner brought him into direct conflict with the authorities. He was incensed by the British transfer of parts of the Ogaden to Ethiopian sovereignty in 1897. He became increasingly militant after the administration for northern Somalia came under the Foreign Office and was moved from the Indian Office supervision in Aden in 1898. The final straw appeared to be broken with the British installation of a Consul General, assisted by 10 British officials and 130 Indian troops, in Berbera.

He came into direct conflict with British authorities in 1899, when he was accused of complicity in the theft of a rifle. After declaring a *jihad* against all infidels, including the British, Christian Ethiopians and certain Muslim Somalis who did not accept his conservative teachings, Muhammad Abdallah first struck the Ethiopian outpost at Jijiga, a town on the trade route to Harar, in the Ogaden. He judged that the Ethiopians would be more susceptible to his military efforts because they were still fairly thin in the Ogaden and their lines of communication were the longest there. The Ethiopians, clearly upset by having lost a garrison only 50 miles from Harar, proposed to the British a joint campaign to restore order in the Ogaden. In the face of an enemy force composed of 15,000 Ethiopians, 1000 loyal Somalis and a handful of British officers, Muhammad Abdallah withdrew his forces and moved into territory of the Majertain, by this time under Italian protection. A British expedition, sent into the Ogaden in 1901 to cut off Muhammad Abdallah and cut his source of munitions being smuggled from Djibouti, was unsuccessful. By now termed the "Mad Mullah" by the British, he soon began raiding Somali villages in the British Protectorate. In January 1903, the British mounted an imposing international force, including one column of 1,900 Central African, Sudanese and Indian troops; a second column composed of 2,000 English, Indian, Somali and Boer units; and a third force of 5,000 Ethiopians to attack the Mullah's forces in his Dolbuhanta redoubt. Using the superb guerrilla tactics that characterized his 20-year campaign against the British, he presented no target for the conventional forces, picking and choosing points for night-time attack. When the rainy season immobilized the various columns, Muhammad Abdullah pressed his attacks. The British changed their commander in July 1903 and, with a force nearly doubled in size, a new campaign was instituted in January 1904. This time, the force was more successful, and after hitting the Mullah's forces hard at Jid Ali, the British thought they had him cornered in the Daroor valley. A British offer of safe passage to Mecca was spurned.

At Illig in the Dolbuhanta region on 5 March 1905, Muhammad Abdullah signed with the Italians, newly installed on the southern Somali coast, an agreement of peace and protection which made the "Mad Mullah" the legitimate ruler of the territory of Nogal. This area had been carved from the existing Italian sphere of interest, located between the Sultanate of Obbia and the Sultanate of Majertain. Rather than neutralize his forces, Muhammad Abdullah delighted

in raiding the Italian-protected Hawiye and Rahanwayn, the traditional enemies of the Darood.<sup>17</sup> His Sultanate grew in importance as it attracted the devout, the dissident and the outlaw, especially those who did not wish to pay the *dia*, the traditional blood money the payment of which the devout Mad Mullah did not approve. The British continued to look upon the Mullah as an outlaw. After 3 years of uneasy relations between groups in the Horn, the British decided to mount a huge expedition to finish off Muhammad Abdullah. Unexpectedly, the expedition was canceled, evidently for economic reasons, and in November 1909, the British decided to evacuate the interior of their colony. The Mullah abandoned his sultanate in 1911 and shifted his focus to the British territory. The Italians, who had always looked upon the Mad Mullah as an international problem, decided after he left the Nogal valley that he was only a British problem.

Over the next 4 years, the Mullah kept his forces together, moving frequently to avoid becoming the target of British riposte. Muhammad Abdullah's men even raided the British garrison at Berbera in 1914. Generally keeping free of any potentially conflicting alliances, the Mullah did deal with the Ethiopians during the First World War. In 1915, he negotiated for marriage with one of the daughters of Lijj Iyasu, the chosen successor son to King Menelik, who was demonstrating interest in converting to Islam, causing alarm throughout the political class of Ethiopia (and leading to his overthrow in 1917, after only seven months in power, in favor of the young Haile Selassie). Beginning in 1915, growing older and in ill health, he began to build heavy forts in the interior of British Somaliland. From these positions, his dervishes were able to raid far and wide in pursuit of treasure, cattle and women. He continued to resist the British until 1920, when Britain introduced a new military technology to the battlefield. Having seen the effectiveness of aviation in Europe, the British colonial authorities sent the famous British "Z" squadron to Somaliland. The 20-pound bombs of the epoch caused little damage to the heavy forts built by the Mullah, but they broke the spirit of the freedom-loving, anticolonial resistance leader. He retreated to the southern Ogaden, where he died of influenza at the end of 1920. Although the Hawiye, Marehan and other clan groups complained bitterly about his activities at the time he directed the dervishes against the enemies of the Dolbuhanta, his memory today remains strong in the hearts of all Somalis and could prove to be a rallying point for antforeign protest.

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<sup>17</sup> Hess, *ibid.*, p. 85.

## 6. NORTHERN SOMALIA

Northern Somalia has an Isaaq majority that currently monopolizes the government which declared its independence from Somalia on 18 May 1991. Although the decision to assert sovereignty received a very large majority in the Somali National Movement (SNM) central committee (304 votes against 16 abstentions), the unilateral move led to tensions within the Gadabursi, Warsangali, Dolbuhanta and Issa communities. Isaaq hegemony in the newly-proclaimed "Republic of Somaliland" was further illustrated in the "independent" government announced on 4 June 1991. The most significant ministries (diplomacy, internal and external security, and finance) were awarded to Isaaq clansmen. Other ministries were accorded to Darood (3), Dolbuhanta (2) and Warsangali (1).<sup>18</sup> There are no Issa in the government, which probably explains why the major dissident anti-Issa political group moved quickly to "recognize" the independent government in Somaliland (see chronology). Such party recognition, of course, has no international standing, and to the time of this writing, no government has formally recognized the Republic of Somaliland. Several governments, including the U.S., France and the United Kingdom have sent delegations to northern Somalia. After the expected Eritrean referendum vote in favor of independence in April 1993, the international pressures to recognize the Republic of Somaliland will grow.

Dissatisfaction with Isaaq control led to splits within the SNM, and a military coup attempt in Berbera in early 1992. The rebellion in Berbera was led by the former commander-in-chief of the SNM military, Ibrahim Jega Waineh, known as "big ears." His resistance was built around two armored cars and small arms.<sup>19</sup> The rebel group styled itself the "Somaliland Salvation Committee." The civil strife in Somaliland during 1992 led to conciliation efforts by the clan elders and religious leaders, many of whom had been forced into exile during the Siad Barre regime. According to information from Somaliland authorities,<sup>20</sup> this initiative led to an elaborate reconciliation ceremony in Hargeisa on 7 October. The previously feuding President of Somaliland, Abdirahman Ahmed Ali "Tur," and Ahmed Mohamed Mohamoud "Silanyo," former chairman of the SNM, each participated at the main table, with the mayor of Hargeisa, Omer Boobe, as moderator. The two feuding sub-clans at the center of the Somaliland civil war, Issa Muse and Isaaq Habr Yunis, agreed to a cease-fire, to end all disputes over the ownership of the Berbera area and to liberate all governmental infrastructural properties, such

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<sup>18</sup> Indian Ocean Newsletter no. 482 (8 June 1991), p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> Indian Ocean Newsletter no. 525 (2 May 1992), p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> Provided in early December 1992 to the author by the "Republic of Somaliland Mission," 1511 K street, NW, Suite 429, Washington, DC 20005.

as airports, ports, fuel facilities, and factories from clan control. We do not know how this peace agreement is succeeding.

Among the divided Isaaq in the north, there is considerable pressure to decentralize authority from Hargeisa. The firing of the SNM defense minister in December 1991 brought forth some of the intra-clan rivalries among the Isaaq. In this regard, most of the minority groups are with the Isaaq because there is no other viable alternative. Efforts by the Hargeisa authorities to develop control over revenue sources such as import duties and other taxes have led to disturbances in both Burao and Berbera.

As we examine the new shape of the political system in Somaliland, there are a number of historical factors which intrude into the mix. The Ogadenis and the Isaaq Idagala sub-clan have grudges against each other that go far into history. The Issa have maintained the northeastern frontier of the Somali world for the past century or so; Somalis have long memories, and most other groups have not forgotten Issa collaboration with first the French, in their colonization of Djibouti, and later with the 1930s Italian conquest of the Horn. It is interesting that a significant number of northern Darood and Gadabursi are opposed to independence for the former British Somaliland. According to one report, disaffiliated Gadabursi and Darood are threatening to re-launch the **United Somali Party (USP)**, an anti-Isaaq party established before independence in 1960.<sup>21</sup>

The north is also the area where militant Islam appears to have made the most significant encroachments. According to press reports,<sup>22</sup> groups of militant conservative Muslims are proliferating across the Horn of Africa. The most significant group is the Islamic Union Party, known as *'Ittihad*, modeled on the Muslim Brotherhood. It has made its gains in northern Somalia, the Ogaden and northern Kenya; set up military training camps in northern Somalia and the Ogaden; and provides money and military materiel to affiliates across the Horn. More than 1000 armed *Ittihadi* swept into the garrison town of Boosaaso in June 1992, proclaiming an Islamic republic. Although the local militia drove them out of town, the group retreated to the nearby town of Laasqoray, where it has now grown to over 2000 militants.

According to miscellaneous reporting, the food situation in the north is not so bad. The rains have been good this year. Somaliland remains largely devastated by Siad Barre's army, and the primary problem appears to be one of distribution rather than quantities. The livestock trade with the Gulf states, traditionally one of the most important export industries for the previously united

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<sup>21</sup> **Indian Ocean Newsletter** no. 484 (22 June 1991), p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> Jennifer Parmelee, "Muslims on Rise in Horn of Africa," **Washington Post** (11 November 1992), pp. 1, A28.

Somalia, is showing signs of taking off. Much of northern Somalia's trade is through Djibouti's modern port. It is also facilitated by the modern banking sector of Djibouti, which has grown wealthy in the 15 years of Djibouti independence as the secure financial entrepôt for smuggling into both Ethiopia and Somalia. The issue of Somaliland's relations with the southern Somali government is something that should appropriately be left for the Somalis to decide.

## 7. SIGNIFICANT DATES IN SOMALI HISTORY/CHRONOLOGY TO *RESTORE HOPE*

30 Jun 60	Northern Somalia achieves independence from the UK.
1 Jul 60	Southern Somalia is given independence by the Italians. The two independent states voluntarily join in a single republic. Aden Abdulleh Osman is elected President.
10 Dec 61	Attempted coup. Following the dismissal of Minister of Health, Suk Ali Guimale, a group of military officers attempted to take control of a military unit in the north. The goal of the group was to take over administration of the north. The failed coup leaders were promptly placed on trial and imprisoned until January 1965.
Apr-May 63	Growing dissatisfaction in northern Somalia with being governed from Mogadishu rises to the surface after new tax measures are imposed. Local traditional leaders, as well as the governor, declare their support to secession.
2 May 63	A state of siege is declared in Hargeisa.
10 Jun 67	Al Abdar-Rashid Shermarke is elected President by the National Assembly.
Mar 69	In open and free elections, the government party obtains approximately 40% of the vote, with the remainder distributed among 64 clan-based parties.
15 Oct 69	President Abderrachid Ali Shermarke is assassinated by a policeman.
21 Oct 69	Successful coup. The army, with the help of the police, takes power in a bloodless coup, and General Mohammed Siad Barre installs the Republic of Somalia.
Oct 72	President Barre announces the choice of Latin script for the Somali alphabet.
End 72	An American oil company, Tenneco, announces the discovery of a large deposit of natural gas in the Bale region of the Ogaden. Only 30 miles from the Somali frontier, and in the belief that the gas find might indicate substantial oil deposits, the Ethiopian military deploys substantial forces along the frontier.
Early 73	There are reports of skirmishes between Somali and Ethiopian forces in the frontier area.
15 Feb 74	Somalia joins the Arab League, sponsored by Saudi Arabia. The Saudis hoped by this action to neutralize the growing Soviet influence in Mogadishu.
11 Jul 74	Soviet President Podgorny and Somali leader Siad Barre sign of Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in Moscow.
Mid-75	Relations between the Siad Barre government and religious groups become strained. The government executes 10 sheikhs for opposing the government's policies stressing sexual equality.

Jul 1976            Single-party state proclaimed under the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party.

3 Feb 77            There is a shootout in the Ethiopian *dergue* (junta). Chief of State Taferi Bante and several of his supporters are killed. The new Ethiopian leader, Mengistu Haile Mariam, is congratulated the following day by the Soviet Ambassador. Leaders in Mogadishu are concerned by this turn of events.

13 Mar 77            Fidel Castro visits Mogadishu. Hoping to retain influence in both Ethiopia and Somalia, the Soviet Union requests Fidel to act as the Soviet go-between in the Horn. Fidel goes on to Addis Ababa the next day. Following his personal invitations, Presidents Mengistu and Siad Barre meet in Aden on 16 March 1977. At the meeting, Castro proposes that the two leaders put aside their differences and join their countries, plus Djibouti (due for independence in June) and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) in a "Socialist Union of the Horn of Africa." Barre angrily rejects the proposal.<sup>23</sup>

15 May 77            Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) forces blow up two trestles on the Djibouti-Addis Ababa railway, closing rail access to Ethiopia for over 13 months.

23 Jul 77            Somali forces in the Ogaden launch full scale attacks on Ethiopian military outposts and register significant gains.

26 Jul 77            The United States and the United Kingdom announce that they will provide arms to the Somali government. The French government quickly joins the group.

17 Aug 77            The Soviet Union can no longer sit on the fence in the Ogaden and makes its first public criticism of Somali actions.

Late Aug 77           Siad Barre visits Moscow and makes a final plea to the Soviet government to renounce its support of the Mengistu regime in Ethiopia. On his return trip, he stops in Cairo and meets with President Sadat.

7 Sep 77            Ethiopia breaks diplomatic relations with Somalia.

13 Sep 77            The Soviet Union halts all arms deliveries to Somalia.

                      Siad Barre makes an impromptu trip to Riyaad to request monetary support.

18 Oct 77            In a highly successful commando operation, German counterterrorist forces recapture a Lufthansa aircraft hijacked to Mogadishu while on a flight between Mallorca and Frankfurt. The terrorists had called for the liberation of 11 German and two Turkish prisoners held in German prisons. Almost simultaneously, the German government announced the suicides of Adreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin and Jean-Carl Raspe, Baader-Meinhof band killers, while being held in prison.

21 Oct 77            Soviet advisors begin to leave Somalia. Siad Barre rails at the Soviets.

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<sup>23</sup> Robert G. Patman, *The Soviet Union in the Horn of Africa: The Diplomacy of Intervention and Disengagement*, pp. 202-203.

13 Nov 77      Somalia expels all remaining Soviet military advisors and abrogates the 1974 Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union.

26 Nov 77      The Soviet Union launches what would turn out to be the largest sea and airlift in African history, moving \$1 billion in arms, 12,000 Cuban troops and 1,500 Soviet military advisors to Ethiopia.

Jan 78          Ethiopian counteroffensive begins to take effect.

5 Mar 78      Ethiopian forces retake Jijiga.

8 Mar 78      Somali troops leave the Ogaden.

9 Mar 78      Siad Barre announces the removal of his last troops from the Ogaden.

Apr 78          Army troops, angered by the defeat in the Ogaden, attempt to assassinate Siad Barre. The coup plotters, mostly air force personnel, were primarily Majertain clan members. The leaders are able to escape the country; they form the Somali Salvation Front (SSF).

Dec 79          In a parody of an election, President Siad Barre is re-elected by the National Assembly for another 6-year term.

Jan 80          Maj. Gen. Siad Barre elected President by the National Assembly.

Apr 80          The U.S. signs an agreement with Somalia for the use of Berbera.

Apr 81          The Somali National Movement (SNM) is founded in London.

Jul 82          Using the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) as its political cover, Ethiopian military forces occupy the towns of Balanbale and Goldogob.

Feb 83          Inter-clan disputes break out in both northern and southern Somalia. In the north, Dolbuhanta clansmen raid Isaaq settlements, seizing weapons, women and cattle. Elements of the SNM take up the Isaaq cause, and they in turn are opposed by Dolbuhanta militia supplemented by national army units. By June 1983, over 160 are reportedly killed in these battles. In concurrent hostilities in the south, fights over water access erupt between Marehan and Hawiye groups. Sporadic raids continue throughout 1983.

31 Dec 84      Elections for the National Assembly. The Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party is the only party to present candidates, taking all 171 elected (of a total of 177) seats.

Apr 85          Somalia restores relations with Libya, broken in August 1981 when it became apparent that Qadhafi was funding both the SNM and the SSDF. By restoring relations, Siad Barre reportedly hoped to persuade Qadhafi to halt aid to the two rebel organizations and to shift that assistance to Somalia's government. Siad's diplomatic effort is unsuccessful.



Oct 85 SNM elements bomb the Hargeisa officers' club.

7 Apr 86 Siad orders the arrest of over 200 officers -- mainly air force -- said to be implicated in coup plotting. The officers arrested are primarily from the Hawiye and Majertain clan groups. Many had been trained in the United States. There are rumors that events which led to the downfall of pro-U.S. dictators in the Philippines and Haiti persuade Siad that the U.S. plans a similar fate for him.

Mid-Apr 86 Siad orders the arrest of 15 fundamentalist Islamic teachers in northern Somalia. The nationality of the preachers include Egyptians, Iranians and Saudis.

23 May 86 President Barre is badly injured in an automobile accident in Mogadishu and is medevaced to Saudi Arabia. The accident sparks a fierce power struggle among senior army officers.<sup>24</sup> The struggle is apparently won by a "constitutional faction," led by Brig. Gen. Mahammad 'Ali Samantar, the first vice president. Samantar, although a *toumal*, has the support of the army which appreciates his honesty and administrative abilities and hopes that he can establish a government of national conciliation. Opposed to this faction are the "Marchan faction," composed primarily of members of the president's immediate family, including Foreign Minister Abdirahman Jama Barre, the president's son "Maslah," who had made his fortune as the head of the army's quartermaster corps, and the president's senior wife, the formidable Mama Khadija.

23 Jun 86 Siad Barre returns to Mogadishu from Saudi Arabia. His actions demonstrate to all that age has begun to impair his faculties. Barre takes special care to humiliate Samantar publicly, by calling him an "incompetent" in the presence of other senior officers. He refuses, however, to obey the recommendations of his family to fire Samantar and place a dependable Marchan in his place.

23 Dec 86 Siad Barre is re-elected President by the national assembly, without opposition.

Feb 87 Siad announces a new cabinet, shifting Mohammed Ali Samantar from Ministry of Defense to newly-created post of Prime Minister.

Dec 87 Siad Barre announces new cabinet with several controversial appointments, including move of General Aden Nur from his post as one of three vice ministers for Defense to Minister of Defense. Jama Barre is made Minister of Finance. He is a Marchan and a firm opponent of the IMF-backed economic reform measures. General Aden Nur was a vice minister of defense closely linked to Siad's son, who commands the influential 77th military sector in Mogadishu. He has been closely associated with measures to contain the influence of non-Marchan in the government.

21-22 Mar 88 Second face-to-face meeting between Somali and Ethiopian leaders in Djibouti. Somali military units were at the time under growing pressure in the North. Following this meeting, the Ethiopian Foreign Minister, Berhanu Bayeh, and Somali's Deputy Foreign Minister, Ahmed Mahommoud Farah, continues the negotiations in Mogadishu on 1-2 April 1988.

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<sup>24</sup> Laitin and Samatar, *ibid.*, pp. 168 *et seq.*

- 4 Apr 88 Accord with Ethiopia calling for normalization of relations. Siad encourages the Western Somali Liberation Front to avoid further confrontation with Ethiopian troops which are withdrawn from the frontier area.
- 27 May 88 Somali National Movement-supported guerrillas open offensive, taking Burao and attacking Hargeisa. The road to Berbera is blocked. It is believed that this offensive is a direct reaction to warming relations between Mogadishu and Addis Ababa. Government troops, unable to defeat the poorly-armed and badly-led SNM forces, turn their heavy weapons against the civilian portions of Hargeisa and Berbera, devastating both towns and killing ten of thousands of local inhabitants. Tensions rise quickly in the Somali military and several officers and men reportedly refuse orders to proceed to the north. The SNM forces appear to have great support among the native Isaaq population of the Northern region. Although, in the past, Siad has been generally able to encourage Ogadeni support for increased WSLF activity as a counterweight for suspected Ethiopian military moves in the border area, there seems little support for Siad's narrowly-based regime.
- 3 Jun 88 The UN evacuates its personnel from Hargeisa and northern Somalia.
- 30 Jun 88 Amnesty International accuses the Siad regime of "systematic torture of prisoners."
- 12 Jul 88 A Somali air force pilot crashes his MiG 17 into Djibouti territorial waters and requests political asylum.
- Sep 88 The government sends loyal Marehan forces north to combat the continuing pressure from SNM and other dissidents. To compensate for the withdrawal of loyalist forces, President Siad Barre has the presidential palace reinforced with anti-aircraft and other heavy weapons.
- Nov 88 The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Jean-Pierre Hocké, announces that the UNHCR will gradually reduce its presence in Somalia, with plans to terminate the program by the end of 1990. This unprecedented decision on the UNHCR follows charges and investigations of wide-scale abuses and corruption in the program.<sup>25</sup>
- 3 Feb 89 Secretary of State Baker meets with Prime Minister Mohammed Ali Samantar in Washington. Baker states that assistance to Somali cannot be restored until the government of Somali can demonstrate proper respect to human rights.
- 8 Mar 89 Responding to continuing problems in the Northwest and Togdheer regions, the government appoints a 3-man committee to look into the matter.
- 11 Apr 89 In yet another cabinet reshuffle, Finance Minister Jama Barre moves back to Foreign Affairs, Mohammed Sheikh Osman leaves the President's office for the Ministry of Finance, and Aden Nur is dropped from the government.
- Jul 89 Following the fall of Nur, a fellow Ogadeni, Col. Ahmed Omar, former chief of staff of the 26th military district, defects to the SNM.

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<sup>25</sup> *Le Monde*. 16 novembre 1988, p. 3.

9 Jul 89           The Catholic archbishop of Mogadishu, Salvatore Colombo, is murdered by an unidentified assassin. Colombo had held the position since 1975.

14 Jul 89           Following Friday services, riots break out in Mogadishu in protest against the recent arrest of several sheikhs accused of complicity in the archbishop's murder. At least 47 rioters are killed by Barre's police. It is believed that several Isaaq and Hawiye tribesmen are killed in reprisal. General Mohammed Siad "Maslah," the president's son, takes personal charge of the repressive operations. Arms are said to be provided to Marehan clansmen in the city for protection from the city's majority Hawiye population.

24 Jul 89           Aden Nur and former Interior Minister Abdullah Ba'adle are arrested in a crackdown on important Ogadeni and Hawiye members.

29 Aug 89           The Somali Socialist Party announces its approval of Siad Barre's declaration of intention to introduce multiparty political elections by the end of 1990.

1 Sep 89           In Rome, Prime Minister Lt Gen Mohammed Ali Samantar requests Italian mediation to end the conflict with the SNM.

20 Sep 89           Government forces, in hot pursuit of a number of southern Ogadeni members of the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM), enter Kenya near the town of Liboi. Four Kenyan policemen are killed, with four wounded. The Kenyan government protests the incursion, deaths, and destruction of a telecommunications station.

17 Oct 89           The government of Libya denies that it has sent forces to Mogadishu to prop up the Siad Barre government.

21 Oct 89           The 20th anniversary of Siad Barre's seizure of power passes without much celebration.

5 Nov 89           A committee is appointed to set up the rules for multiparty elections.

12-13 Nov 89       A group of Hawiye officers and men belonging to the 4th division at Galka'yo, in the Mudug area of the central region, mutiny. General Barre's son, "Moslah," leads a force of Marehan clansmen to suppress the mutiny. Punishment is meted to local Hawiye villages.

5 Dec 89           A mutiny of Hawiye members in Mogadishu breaks out in protest to the treatment of their families in Mudug. They join with the SNM in a vain attempt to capture Hargeisa.

9 Jan 90           Prime Minister Mohammed Ali Samantar is dismissed because of his inability to stifle the Hawiye protests. The president's half-brother, Jama Barre, loses the Foreign Ministry.

20 Jan 90           Africa Watch, following a 6-month investigation, reports that over 50,000 Somali civilians had been killed in the previous 19 months during a campaign by government forces to quell the several rebel movements threatening the regime.

15 Feb 90 Siad seemingly decides that no reforms are possible; he reappoints Samantar. There is a substantial government change.

late Mar/  
20 Apr 90 The SNM has a well-publicized 6th congress in Ethiopia. Ahmed Mohammed "Silanyo" cedes the chairmanship to Abdirahman Ahmed Ali.

30 Apr 90 The government of Somalia restores the legality of the use of *qat* in "response to the desire of the people." It had been outlawed in March 1983.

23 May 90 A manifesto signed by 114 political moderates, including many Hawiye tribesmen deposed by Siad Barre in his 1969 coup, is published. The manifesto calls for formation of a provisional government and for a national conference to reconcile the various ethnic groups now engaged in fighting and subversion.

11 Jun 90 In response to the above, nearly half of the signers are arrested, including former President Aden Abdullah Osman (1960-67) and former national police chief, Mohammed Abshir.

6 Jul 90 Hoping to demonstrate that he is unafraid to appear in public, Siad Barre attends a soccer match. He is pelted and booed by the audience. Barre's bodyguard detail loses control and fires indiscriminately into the crowd, killing at least 65 people.

15 Jul 90 A similar response is given to a crowd protesting the arrests of the manifesto signers.

16 Jul 90 The government announces that a constitutional referendum will be held on 31 October, with multiparty elections scheduled for 1 February 1991.

18 Jul/  
2 Aug 90 The SNM seizes a Soviet fishing trawler in the Gulf of Aden. The Soviet Union makes a payment of \$250,000 for the return of the boat and crew.

2 Aug 90 The Council of Ministers announces that the multiparty system is legal.

21 Aug 90 Expiration of the US-Somali military access agreement. It can now be canceled by either party on a one-year notice.

2 Sep 90 Mohammed Hawadle Madar, an Isaaq, is named Prime Minister. Jama Barre returns to Finance and is also named Deputy Prime Minister. Samantar is named First Vice-President on 4 September.

6 Sep 90 Bombs explode in Somali government offices in Mogadishu.

2 Oct 90 The three principal Somali opposition movements, the United Somali Congress (USC), the Somali National Movement (SNM) and the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM), sign an agreement defining common objectives for the defeat of the government.

7 Oct 90 Ethiopian leader Haile Mengistu Mariam orders rebel Somali groups to leave their Ethiopian bases by the end of the month.

12 Oct 90      A new constitution permitting multipartyism takes effect. The 31 October referendum is canceled because of a declining security situation.

21 Oct 90      Siad Barre cancels the celebrations of his 21st year in power, citing economics. Poor security is closer to the reason.

23-24 Oct 90    Strong public protests in Mogadishu against large increases in oil prices and the continued incarceration of the manifesto signers. The security forces demonstrate some restraint.

Nov 90        The USC and the SPM establish a joint coordinating committee.

8 Nov 90      USC forces launch attack on the government garrison at Bullo-Burte, killing the commander.

15 Nov 90     Substituting one hated son for another, Barre places Minister of Public Works, BGen Mohammed Siad Hersi "Morgan" in the Ministry of Defense for BGen Abdurahman Mohammed Siad "Moslah."

25 Nov 90     Morgan also replaces Moslah as commander in chief of the armed forces.

2-4 Dec 90    Feuding within the Hawiye clan in Mogadishu leads to looting and a firm government response, with perhaps 50 killed.

4-5 Dec 90    The government abandons any further pretense to respecting the constitution to make many arrests, including more signers of the manifesto.

5 Dec 90      The American Embassy in Mogadishu calls for voluntary departures among the American community and informs community leaders of the need for a possible evacuation.

6 Dec 90      Soldiers belonging to the Marehan clan of President Barre kill 10 people at a market in Mogadishu. The government claims that the culprits were bandits. The USC claims increased battle successes against government forces.

8 Dec 90      The State Department follows up with an advisory for departure in view of the ongoing civil war in the country.

10-29 Dec 90   A general decline in public order in Mogadishu leads to much looting, arrests and killings. Press reports indicate "hundreds of deaths."

25 Dec 90     The government authorizes the formation of legal political parties. The move is denounced by the SNM as a "sham."

26 Dec 90     The Government of Saudi Arabia announces economic assistance, in the form of fuel worth \$70 million, to the government of Somalia.

30 Dec 90     There is a major upsurge in local violence in Mogadishu and continuous fighting between government troops and USC insurgents. The next four weeks are marked by

increasing rebel gains. Several calls for a cease-fire to remove non-combatants are rejected by the USC high command.

- 5-6 Jan 91 Helicopter evacuation of the U.S. Embassy compound in Mogadishu. 116 persons are evacuated, including the Soviet Ambassador and his staff, various Italians and other third country nations. Some shots are fired by the U.S. Marine rescue team, but no casualties are reported.
- 25 Jan 91 Siad Barre offers to resign if the USC forces will permit a cease-fire. The offer is summarily rejected.
- 27 Jan 91 Siad Barre flees Mogadishu with many of his supporters, after four weeks of violent fighting which leaves the city in ruins. Barre and his forces retreat to the port town of Kismayu, where they will attempt to organize a riposte to their defeat in Mogadishu. Each of the three major rebel movements now controls his ethnic zone. With the departure of Barre and his fellow Marehan, the capital was in the hands of the victorious Hawiye forces of the USC. In the North, the Isaaq-dominated SNM quickly overcame government forces in Berbera and Hargeisa. Elsewhere in the south, the Ogadeni-led forces of the SPM took control of much of the remaining territory. Kenya's president Arap Moi, who always maintained good relations with Siad in power, continues to support him in internal exile, with arms and other goods.
- 29 Jan 91 The USC names Ali Mahdi Mohammed, a 52-year-old businessman (owner of the Maka Hotel) and a member of the Abgal sub-clan of the Hawiye, as interim President, and Omar Arteh Ghalib, an Isaaq, as interim Prime Minister. The Isaaq-based SNM takes Hargeisa and Berbera. Ali Mahdi Mohammed notes that he is taking on the task of president in a "provisional capacity." He invites the members of other anti-Siad groups to meet in Mogadishu on 28 February. Claiming that they had not been consulted, General Aideed, the SPM and the SNM immediately reject the naming of Ali Mahdi as interim president. This sets the stage for the months of civil strife in Mogadishu and eventually to *Operation Restore Hope*.
- 30 Jan 91 SNM forces capture the port of Berbera. They also are at the gates of the towns of Hargeisa and Burao, both at least 80% destroyed by Siad Barre's forces in May 1988. There are reports of fighting between Gadabursi (traditional allies of Barre's Marehan clan) irregulars and SNM units outside Boromoa.
- 1 Feb 91 The naming of Ali Mahdi Mohammed as provisional president is termed "hasty" by the representatives of the SNM and the SPM. The USC reports that it will fulfill the requirements of the Tripartite Agreement signed with the other two anti-Siad groups on 2 October 1990.
- 2 Feb 91 Reports arrive of the killing of hundreds of Siad supporters as they attempted to flee north towards the Ethiopian frontier.
- 9 Feb 91 Forces of the USC fight with Ogadenis of the anti-Siad SPM at Afgoi, some 30 kms south of Mogadishu.

13 Feb 91      Representatives of the provisional government arrive in Rome for talks with Italian politicians and business leaders. A USC dissident group in London calls upon Western countries not to reopen their embassies in Mogadishu until "a legitimate government" is formed.

mid-Feb 91     The SNM announces that it will not attend the 28 February reconciliation conference. The SNM loses affiliation of Issa groups in its membership.

18 Mar 91      The Foreign Minister of the provisional government, Omar Arteh Ghaleb, leaves on a trip to visit Arab states of the Gulf in an effort to secure recognition and financial support.

4 Apr 91       A cease-fire between forces of the USC and SPM lasts but four days.

23 Apr 91      USC forces take over Kismayu and Baidoa. The population of Baidoa has swollen to over 400,000, mostly Marehan, fleeing from the new government in Mogadishu.

24 Apr 91      A joint declaration purportedly signed by the USC, SNM and the Somali Democratic Front (SDM--generally considered to represent the interests of the Rahanwein clan) calls for national unity and territorial integrity. The SNM later repudiates the agreement, claiming that it was issued without the agreement of its central committee.

4-7 May 91     Northern clan groups gather in Burao in an effort to hold reconciliation.

15 May 91      The governments of Italy and Egypt call for a meeting of all Somali liberation movements in Cairo on 8 July to prepare for national unity.

18 May 91      At a special congress of the SNM at Burao, the delegates support a unilateral declaration of independence by SNM civilian head Abdirahman Ahmed Ali "Tur," in northern Somalia. Hargeisa becomes the capital of the Republic of Somaliland, including all of what was British Somaliland. This declaration followed the desertion by Barre in the south and considerable northern sentiment, especially from the military side of the SNM.

2 Jun 91       The OAU, meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, calls for the Somaliland Republic to rescind its secession declaration.

5 Jun 91       The first cabinet of the Somaliland Republic is announced. SNM chairman Abdirahman Ahmed Ali "Tur" is made provisional president for a term of 2 years.

5-11 Jun 91    Efforts by Djiboutian President Hassan Gouled to broker peace between the contending Somali factions. These efforts come to naught. This meeting, termed "Djibouti I" brought delegations representing the USC, the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (Majertain), SPM, United Somali Front (Issa) and the Somali Democratic Alliance (Gadabursi). The SNM did not come to Djibouti. A cease-fire is agreed to, and joint action against a return by Siad Barre is agreed upon.

15-16 Jun 91   Serious fighting in Mogadishu between the local Abgal partisans of Ali Mahdi and the Habr Gedr Sa'ad clansmen of General Mohammed Farah Aideed.

Jul 91           The SPM reconquers Kismayu.

5 Jul 91        Threats from the Darood lead to the election of an anti-Darood hardliner, Mohammed Farah Aideded, as USC chairman.

15-21 Jul 91    Presidents Gouled and Moi open Djibouti II, a second effort to secure Somali reconciliation and unity. The participants agree on steps to promote peace, unity and democracy. A cease-fire is to take effect on 26 July. Joint military action against Siad is agreed. The parties agree to a two year transitional presidency by Ali Mahdi. The SNM skipped the meeting. USC military chief Aideded rejects the idea of Ali Mahdi's recognition as president.

16 Jul 91       The USC takes Kismayu back.

23 Jul 91       Somaliland Republic president "Tur" rejects the recommendations of Djibouti II and vows that northern secession is "irreversible."

10 Aug 91       Following long bilateral negotiations in Mogadishu, the USC and SNM agree to continue the national dialogue with the goal of cooperation and unification.

18 Aug 91       Ali Mahdi is sworn in as national president, citing the agreements of Djibouti II. This action is immediately contested by General Mohammed Aideded, chairman of the USC.

5-7 Sep 91      General Aideded continues to dispute the role of Ali Mahdi; fratricidal battles in Mogadishu leave at least 300 dead.

Sep 91          Siad Barre's forces capture Baidoa.

                Split in the Hawiye. As a result, certain Marehan supporters move from their redoubt on the Kenya border to within 150 kms of Mogadishu.

28 Sep 91       The USC central committee criticizes General Aideded's role in stirring up intra-clan fighting among the Hawiye. Djibouti II is ratified.

3 Oct 91        Ali Mahdi announces his cabinet which is very large and unwieldy. All clans are represented.

30 Oct 91       General Aideded condemns the Italians for their support of Siad Barre over the years. He asks for the recall of the Italian Ambassador. On 29 October, Aideded's airmen forced the closure of the Mogadishu airport immediately prior to the arrival of the Italian Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs.

Mid-Nov 91      On 13 November, Ali Mahdi moves his forces close to Aideded's headquarters. Aideded's forces make a lightning response, and generalized intra-Hawiye clan fighting breaks out on 17 November and quickly brings Mogadishu to chaos.

18 Nov 91       General Aideded's men storm the Italian embassy compound. The locale is looted, but the diplomats are given safe passage.



14 Dec 91 A Belgian member of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) dies of wounds obtained in the battle of Mogadishu.

Mid-Dec 91 After over 5,000 killed, upwards of 12,000 wounded, the first relief supplies arrive in Mogadishu after a month of fighting between rival USC factions.

19 Dec 91 General Aideed calls for a cease-fire at a meeting of the USC executive committee that he controls. He noted that previous cease-fires of December 7 and 16 had broken down as result of the failure of Ali Mahdi to keep his commitments.

2 Jan 92 A special session of the Arab League Council is convened to examine "the deteriorating situation in Somalia."

16 Jan 92 The ICRC announces that a third ICRC employee, a Somali, has died as the result of wounds in Mogadishu.

17 Jan 92 The "Ashamud militia" controlling the port area in Mogadishu, opens the doors of the port and permits the local population to pillage the stores held there.

The ICRC reports that the hundreds of thousands of refugees living in camps south of Mogadishu had begun to die of starvation.

21 Jan 92 UN Secretary General Boutros Ghali calls upon the Security Council to take urgent measures for a peaceful solution to the Somali civil war.

23 Jan 92 The UN Security Council adopts resolution UNSCR 733 declaring a total arms embargo on Somalia.

13 Feb 92 Talks between warring factions begin in New York under the auspices of the League of Arab State, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Islamic Conference. After three days of talks, the warring factions agree on a cease-fire and negotiations. There is no sign of relief on the scene in Mogadishu. Press reports quotes "experts" saying that the two factions that agreed to a truce in New York control only 4,000 out of the 20,000 well-armed fighters roaming the streets of Mogadishu.

9 Mar 92 UN officials in Mogadishu report that 100,000 women and children demonstrated in favor of peace.

18 Mar 92 The "Republic of Somaliland" is "recognized" by the main opposition group in the Republic of Djibouti, the *Front pour la restauration de l'unité et de la démocratie* (FRUD).

End-Mar 92 Africa Watch estimates that the fighting in Mogadishu has led to 14,000 deaths and 27,000 wounded in five months of hostilities.

Mid-Apr 92 Forces affiliated with former President Siad Barre move north, capturing a few small villages, before being soundly beaten by USC forces. The Barre forces penetrate to Afgoye, 30 kms. west of the capital, before being repelled to Baidoa, 240 kms northwest of the capital.

- 24 Apr 92      The United Nations Security Council adopts resolution number 751 requesting the Secretary General to deploy a group of 50 UN observers to monitor the cease-fire in Mogadishu, and agreeing, in principle, to establish a UN security force for Somalia when the necessary conditions exist.
- 26 Apr 92      General Aideed's USC, supported by SDM forces, wrest Baidoa from forces loyal to Siad Barre, with many prisoners taken. Other USC units take Garba Harre, the main town in Siad Barre's Gedo area redoubt.<sup>26</sup>
- 28 Apr 92      The UN Secretary General designates Mohammed Sahnoun (Algeria) as his special representative for Somalia.
- Former president Siad Barre takes refuge in Kenya.
- 14 May 92      Kismayu is captured by "Somali Liberation Army" forces led by Col. Omar Jess, with the assistance of Somali Democratic Movement (SDM) and Southern Somali National Movement (SSNM) troopers.
- 17 May 92      Siad Barre arrives in Lagos, Nigeria, where he is accorded political asylum.
- 27 May 92      The leaders of the breakaway "Republic of Somaliland" formally reject any consideration of reunification with southern Somalia.
- 21 Jun 92      General Aideed gives his permission for UN troops to be sent to Mogadishu to guard food convoys.
- 25 Jun 92      The press reports that 150 Somali refugees die from drowning as they leap from a ship carrying them when it is denied entry to Yemen. The ship had been hijacked on 5 June by about 3,400 Somali refugees fleeing the civil war. The local authorities had denied the entrance because they were already caring for about 50,000 Somali refugees.
- 7 Jul 92        USC supporters of Mohamed Farah Aideed charge that UN aircraft are transporting money and military equipment for Ali Mahdi's forces. This forces the suspension of UN flights to Mogadishu, including the deployment of unarmed UN military observers authorized by UNSC resolution. Subsequent investigation indicates that a rogue freight carrier, using an Antonov 32 that had been previously chartered to the UN, had carried several cargos into Mogadishu, contracted by a Mogadishu businessman.<sup>27</sup>
- Mid-Jul 92     Humanitarian organizations launch a coordinated world appeal for help in Somalia.
- 23 Jul 92      The first UN military observers arrive in Mogadishu.

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<sup>26</sup> Indian Ocean Newsletter no. 525 (2 May 1992), pp. 2-3.

<sup>27</sup> Indian Ocean Newsletter No. 536 (18 Jul 92), p. 2.

26 Jul 92      The government of Djibouti announces that a Somali refugee ship sank off its coast. 45 bodies had been recovered.

4 Aug 92      Following a visit to Somalia by the UN Special Representative, Under Secretary Mohammed Sahnoun (Algerian), and French Minister of Health and Humanitarian Action, Bernard Kouchner, it is estimated that approximately one quarter of the Somali population, or about 1.5 million people, are immediately subject to death by starvation.

12 Aug 92      Somali warlord Mohammed Aideed states that he will permit the UN to protect its food supplies, using armed men. The Secretary General of the United Nations, Boutros Ghali, announces that he will deploy 500 UN soldiers to Somalia.

14 Aug 92      President Bush orders a food airlift to take supplies to the starving of Somalia.

17 Aug 92      U.S. troops and aircraft arrive in Mombasa, Kenya, to prepare for a food airlift to Somalia. Ten days of negotiations among the Pentagon, the Red Cross and Kenyan authorities are necessary before the mercy flights begin. According to the agreement, U.S. aircraft would fly into Somalia unarmed, but with the Red Cross displayed on the aircraft.

28 Aug 92      The UN Security Council authorizes an additional 3,500 men to protect food aid convoys.

10 Sep 92      UN officials persuade General Aideed to permit the deployment of an extra 3000 UN troops. Aideed asks the United States to remove the 2,100 Marines now stationed off the coast of Somalia.

14 Sep 92      Forty armed Pakistani troops are carried to Mogadishu on board a U.S. flight. The full contingent of Pakistanis will soon rise to 550 personnel.

16 Sep 92      President Bush orders four USN ships to the coast of Somalia. The ships will contain 2,100 Marines and 1,700 sailors.

18 Sep 92      A U.S. C-130, carrying food to Somalia, takes a bullet on takeoff from desert strip at Beledweyne. The United States suspends flights.

21 Sep 92      A major UN food warehouse in Mogadishu is looted.

10-13 Oct 92      An international donors' conference is held in Geneva. A number of humanitarian and developmental assistance programs are unveiled, including the World Food Program (\$22 million), UNICEF (\$28 million), WHO (\$4.5 million) and UNICEF (\$9 million).

12 Oct 92      Forces loyal to Siad Barre capture Bardera, the site of a large refugee camp. Relief workers are obliged to leave the town.

21 Oct 92      Following demands by roaming gunmen for the payment of fees for permitting food rescue flights to land, the Mogadishu airport is closed.

22 Oct 92 General Aideed refuses to let the Pakistani forces guard the airport, the piers in the port, or the food convoys.

26 Oct 92 UN special envoy, Mohammed Sahnoun, resigns under pressure from New York after his statements in the media criticizing UN relief policies in Somalia.

10 Nov 92 Pakistani units take control of the Mogadishu airport. Their control is periodically affected by "technicals" attempting to extract funds from relief agencies using the airport.

12 Nov 92 A CARE relief convoy is attacked in an ambush while transporting food supplies to Baydhabo, a southern town heavily affected by starvation.

The new UN special representative, Ismat Kittani (Iraqi, former UN General Assembly president in 1981) expresses dismay over the support being given UN relief efforts.

21 Nov 92 The Deputies Committee of the National Security Council reconsider the options in Somalia and, on the basis of a recommendation from Chief of Staff Colin Powell, decide in favor of intervention. According to the press, the decision was based on two compelling considerations: (1) the scale of the human disaster in Somalia; and (2) the realization that the U.S. was the only world power able to do something about it.<sup>28</sup>

3-5 Dec 92 Relief coordination conference meets under UN auspices.

7 Dec 92 The imminent arrival of U.S. forces is signaled by the arrival of U.S. Navy transport vessels off Mogadishu. Two Naval F-14s crisscross the city at 1000 feet.

9 Dec 92 In a nighttime landing, under the klieg lights of the world press, the first U.S. Marine and Naval Seal contingents move into Mogadishu, without casualties, and take charge of the port area and the international airport. They are joined by forward elements of the 13th Demi-Brigade of the French Foreign Legion, arriving from their base in Djibouti. Other national military units expected include Egypt, Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

As "technicals" and other armed groups leave Mogadishu to avoid contact with the U.S. landing force, the security situation in the interior begins to degrade. The ICRC reports that its compound is attacked by bandits.

10 Dec 92 The UN military force commander, Marine LTG Robert B. Johnston, arrives in Mogadishu. Johnston had been General Schwarzkopf's chief of staff in the Persian Gulf War.

A Marine force takes over the abandoned Soviet-built built at Bale Dogle, half way between Mogadishu and Baidoa.

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<sup>28</sup> Don Oberdorfer, "The Path to Intervention: A Massive Tragedy 'We Could do Something About'," *Washington Post* (6 December 1992), p. A1.

- 11 Dec 92      Following meetings over 2 days at the American Embassy in Mogadishu, Hawiye leaders Ali Mahdi Mohammed and Mohammed Aidede agree to a cease-fire and a general truce. This has been the first meeting between Ali Mahdi and Aidede in over a year. The seven-point agreement calls for a reconstitution of the USC, disarmament of all irregulars, including the so-called "technicals," and the disappearance of all internal barriers, including the "green line," separating the two forces.
- 12 Dec 92      UN Secretary General Boutros Ghali publicly calls for U.S. forces to disarm the clans and take steps to ensure political stability.
- 13 Dec 92      The relief agency CARE estimates that 350,000 Somalis will die of starvation during 1992. At least 2 million more remain at risk.
- The first relief ship since 24 October enters Mogadishu harbor.
- 14 Dec 92      Marine General Joseph P. Hoar, Commander in Chief of the U.S. Central Command, as well as other senior U.S. Government officials, reject Boutros Ghali's call to disarm the Somali clans. General Hoar states that the issue of disarmament is "a political issue, one that needs to be settled first and foremost by the Somalis."
- 15-16 Dec 92    The first Marine units enter Baidoa. After securing the airfield, more units are flown in.

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